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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8904

RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE 1053

RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE 836

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE 1173

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEADWW/WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 852

RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 837

RUQMYA/USLO RIYADH PRIORITY 300

BT

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6624

FROM DRAPER: JIDDA PASS HABIB

EXDIS

E.O. 12356: DECI: OADR

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MOPS, MILI, SY, LE, IT, FR, US, IS

SUBJECT: DRAPER MISSION: US MNF DEPLOYMENT AND OTHER ISSUES,

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REF: STATE 271644 (NOTAL)

1. (SECRET-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. THIS MESSAGE NOT ONLY RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS IN REFTEL BUT SETS FORTH WHERE WE ARE TODAY, MONDAY, SEPT 27, FOLLOWING FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT AMIN GEMAYEL AND WITH THE LIAISON AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE, ON WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAF, THE ITALIANS, THE FRENCH, AND THE US SIT.

3. THE GENERAL PICTURE:

--BY THE END OF THE DAY, THE FRENCH WILL HAVE BROUGHT APPROXIMATELY 1050 TROOPS TO BEIRUT AND THE ITALIANS APPROXIMATELY 1100. THIS MORNING, I WATCHED FRENCH HELICOPTERS TAKING CARGO AND VEHICLES INTO THE PORT FROM THE CARRIER FOCH IN THE OUTER PORT. ITALIAN TROOPS WERE ASSEMBLED IN THE PORT AREA, PREPARATORY TO MOVING TO THEIR POSITIONS ELSEWHERE IN THE BEIRUT AREA. THE PRESS OVER THE PAST TWO DAYS HAS BEEN FILLED WITH INTERESTING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN TROOPS.

--I HAVE SEEN FRENCH JEEPS WITH THEIR AERIALS CARRYING FRENCH FLAGS CRUISING IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE CITY, INCLUDING EAST BEIRUT AND BAABDA. THE PRESENCE OF THE MNF IN BEIRUT IS ALREADY A WELL-KNOWN AND WELL PUBLICIZED FACT.

--MEANWHILE THE IDF WITHDRAWAL HAS STOPPED BECAUSE OF YOM KIPPUR, ALTHOUGH EVACUATION OF MOST OF THE CITY PROPER HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

--A NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS THE PRESENCE IN THE LEGAL PORT OF AN IDF MEDICAL UNIT, ALONG WITH SOME THREE APCs, WHICH ARE LOCATED ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE DEBARKATION AREA OF THE ITALIAN TROOPS. THE IDF UNIT IS SUPPOSED TO BE WITHDRAWING TOMORROW, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28.

4. THE ISSUE OF THE IDF USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:

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--PRESIDENT GEMAYEL CONFIRMED TO US TODAY THAT "THE LIMIT OF TOLERATION" OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES IS THAT ISRAELI AIRCRAFT WILL USE THE AIRPORT--IN THE AREA SET ASIDE FOR THEM--ONLY BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 2100 THROUGH 0400 AT NIGHT (OTHER THAN FOR EMERGENCIES). DURING THIS PERIOD, THERE WILL BE NO COMMERCIAL CIVIL AIR ACTIVITIES; AND THE LEBANESE WILL THEREBY BE ABLE TO ARGUE WITH THE UNDERWRITERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES THAT THERE WILL BE NO ISRAELI ACTIVITY AT THE AIRPORT DURING THE HOURS OF CIVIL AIR ACTIVITIES. THIS IS THE POSITION THEY WILL PUT FORWARD TO IDF AND OTHER ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES TONIGHT OR TOMORROW, SEPTEMBER 28. THEY HAVE ASKED FOR US SUPPORT FOR THIS ARRANGEMENT, WHICH THEY CONSIDER REASONABLE. IF ISRAELIS REFUSE, LEBANESE TELL US THEY WILL NOT REOPEN AIRPORT. --IN ADDITION, LAF LIAISON INFORMS US THAT ISRAELIS ARE PREPARED TO GO DOWN TO 12 REPEAT 12 PEOPLE AFTER THE SETTLING- IN PROCESS. THERE MAY BE TWO TRAILERS IN THE AREA WHERE THEY OPERATE.

--IDF WILL NOT REPEAT NOT KEEP VULCANS OR CREW-SERVED WEAPONS, ACCORDING TO LAF LIAISON. IDF SOLDIERS, HOWEVER, ARE EXPECTED TO KEEP THEIR PERSONAL SIDE WEAPONS.

--THE LAF TELLS US THAT THE ISRAELIS WANT TO HAVE AN ASSEMBLY AREA IN THE RADIO ORIENT COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AREA JUST SOUTH OF THE AIRPORT AND ABOVE THE KHALDEH TRIANGLE. FROM THERE, THE SOLDIERS GOING ON LEAVE WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE AIRCRAFT AT THE AIRPORT. THE LEBANESE ARE WORKING TO MAKE ALL THESE ARRANGEMENTS AS INCONSPICUOUS AS POSSIBLE. THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT.

--THE LEBANESE ARE HOPEFUL THAT UNDER THESE ARRANGEMENTS THERE WILL BE NO ISRAELI PERSONNEL IN THE AIRPORT AREA DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS AND THAT ISRAELIS (INCLUDING THE AIR CONTROLLER) WOULD COME INTO THE AIRPORT AT NIGHT ONLY AFTER SOME ONE HOUR'S ADVANCE NOTICE. THEY WOULD COME THROUGH A GATE AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE AIRPORT IN AN INCONSPICUOUS AREA AND THE GATE WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE LAF.

--WE HAVE ASKED LEBANESE AGREEMENT TO CONSULT IN ALL CASES WITH THE US CONTINGENT OF THE MNF ON THE TIMING AND NATURE OF ISRAELI FLIGHTS. WE WILL BE WORKING OUT THESE ARRANGEMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE US CONTINGENT.

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FROM DRAPER: JIDDA PASS HABIB

EXDIS

4. AS REGARDS THE ISRAELIS AT THE "ILLEGAL PORT":
 -- IT IS TRUE THAT PRESIDENT GEMAYEL HAS ACQUIESCED
 IN AN ISRAELI PRESENCE THERE. ANY SUCH ISRAELI
 PRESENCE IS LIKELY TO BE NOMINAL. IT SHOULD BE BORNE
 IN MIND THAT THE ISRAELIS DID NOT REPEAT NOT USE PORT
 FACILITIES EXTENSIVELY IN THE IMMEDIATE BEIRUT AREA
 DURING THEIR MILITARY OPERATIONS THIS SUMMER. THE
 ISRAELIS LANDED TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT FURTHER UP THE
 COAST FROM TIME TO TIME. THE LAF DOES NOT EXPECT THE
 IDF TO USE THE PORT FOR RE-SUPPLY, BUT A MEDICAL UNIT
 COULD BE MOVED THERE, SINCE THE ISRAELIS ON OCCASION
 HAVE USED THE PORT AREA FOR MEDICAL EVACUATION BY HELI-
 COPTER. THE ILLEGAL PORT ITSELF IS CONTROLLED BY THE
 PHALANGE (OR THE SO-CALLED "LEBANESE FORCES"), AND IT
 HAS BEEN AGREED THAT THE FRENCH CONTINGENT OF THE MNF
 WHEREVER ITS DEPLOYMENT ELSEWHERE IN EAST BEIRUT -- WILL
 NOT REPEAT NOT MOVE INTO THE LOGICAL EASTWARD EXIT
 FROM THIS ILLEGAL PORT AREA, SINCE IT COULD BRING THE
 FRENCH INTO UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE SO-
 CALLED "LEBANESE FORCES," AS WELL AS POSSIBLE ISRAELI
 MOVEMENTS FROM THE ILLEGAL PORT.

5. AS REGARDS THE LAND ROUTE FROM KHALDEN NORTHEAST
 TO THE MAZIMYAH CIRCLE AND THE MAIN BEIRUT-DAMASCUS
 HIGHWAY:

-- THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT IDF
 "CONVOYS." THE LAF HAS TAKEN A STRONG POSITION THAT
 IT WILL NOT ESCORT IDF VEHICLES FOR ANY REASON, IN
 CONVOYS OR NOT. AS IT IS, MOST IDF VEHICLE MOVEMENTS
 ALONG THIS ROAD HAVE BEEN IN RELATIVELY SMALL GROUPS.
 A GROUP OF MORE THAN 7 OR 8 VEHICLES HAS BEEN A
 RARITY.

-- US POSITIONS CERTAINLY WOULD BE TO THE WEST OF
 THIS PRINCIPAL LAND ROUTE. WITH OR WITHOUT AN IDF
 VEHICULAR PRESENCE ON THIS ROAD, WE HAD NEVER CONSIDERED
 PUTTING THE US CONTINGENT ON THE ROAD ITSELF. CON-
 SEQUENTLY, SETTING UP US POSITIONS TO THE WEST OF THIS

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ROUTE WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HAD BEEN PLANNED ALL ALONG.

-- THE US POSITIONS WOULD BE TO LEND A "PRESENCE" TO BACK-UP THE LAF AND ISF, WHICH IS FACT WOULD BE CONTROLLING MOVEMENT INTO THE MNF AREA OF OPERATIONS IN A WESTWARD DIRECTION FROM THE LAND ROUTE WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING, AND WHICH THE ISRAELIS WOULD BE USING.

6. TIMING OF US ARRIVAL:

-- ASSUMING REMAINING ISSUES CAN BE RESOLVED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE BEGIN DEPLOYMENT INTO BEIRUT AS EARLY AS FEASIBLE, ON THE LATE AFTERNOON OF TUESDAY, SEPT. 28 OR ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, SEPT. 29. IT IS INDEED AN UNTIDY SITUATION, BUT SOME MOMENTUM IS UNDERWAY. THE FRENCH, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE ENTERING POSITIONS AROUND SABRA TODAY, AND THE ITALIANS MAY MOVE TO POSITIONS JUST OUTSIDE SHATILA CAMP THIS AFTERNOON OR TOMORROW MORNING. ALL OTHER MAJOR MNF DEPLOYMENTS, HOWEVER, WOULD BEGIN SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH OR AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE US CONTINGENT.

-- PRESIDENT AMIN GEMAYEL URGED AGAIN TODAY THAT THE US CONTINGENT ARRIVAL BY WEDNESDAY MORNING, EVEN IF A PRAGMATIC ARRANGEMENT ON AIRPORT USE BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETED BY THAT TIME AND EVEN IF THE LEBANESE HAVE DECIDED THEY CANNOT OPEN THE AIRPORT FOR COMMERCIAL USE BECAUSE OF THE ISRAELI POSITION.

-- MOREOVER, GEMAYEL WENT ON TO TELL THE COMMITTEE THAT HE WAS PAYING EXTRAORDINARY ATTENTION TO THE MNF, SINCE IT COULD LAUNCH "A NEW NATIONAL DYNAMIC IN LEBANON," AND HELP TO OVERCOME THE FATIGUE AND PESSIMISM THAT HAS AFFECTED EVERYONE. THE MNF WILL GIVE THE LAF/ISF A NEW IMPORTANCE AND STRENGTHEN ITS MORALE.

-- HE SAID HE WANTED TO SET UP A CEREMONY TO MARK THE OPENING TO THE CITY ON WEDNESDAY, SOMETIME FROM 12 NOON ON TO 5 P.M., OR IF NECESSARY, ON THURSDAY MORNING. HE WANTS TO HAVE THE CEREMONY ATTENDED BY THE AMBASSADORS AND COMMANDERS OF THE RESPECTIVE FORCES, PLUS APPROXIMATELY A COMPANY EACH OF INFANTRYMEN IN BATTLE DRESS FROM EACH NATIONAL CONTINGENT, PLUS THE LAF.

-- HE OBVIOUSLY IS ATTACHING GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE

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EVENTS OF THIS WEEK AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WILL USE THE WEDNESDAY CEREMONY TO CALL ALL CIVIL SERVANTS AND COURT OFFICIALS BACK TO WORK, SO AS TO PROVE THAT BEIRUT IS RETURNING TO NORMALITY.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

-- AS NOTED ABOVE, I RECOMMEND THAT WE BRING IN AT LEAST SOME OF OUR INITIAL UNITS THROUGH THE PORT ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 28, AND BRING IN THE BULK OF OUR FORCES TO THE AIRPORT ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 29.

-- TO ASSURE THAT THIS CAN BE DONE SATISFACTORILY, I WILL SEEK MEETINGS WITH GENERAL DRORY AND OTHERS AT IDF HEADQUARTERS TONIGHT OR TOMORROW MORNING, IF TONIGHT IS NOT POSSIBLE, BOTH (1) TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE PROPOSAL THAT ISRAELI AIR ACTIVITY IN THE AIRPORT BE CONDUCTED ONLY DURING NIGHTTIME HOURS AND (2) FURTHER TO URGE THAT, EVEN IF THE LEBANESE AND ISRAELIS HAVE NOT REACHED FINAL AGREEMENT, THE IDF SHOULD REMOVE ALL ITS PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT NOW LOCATED IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL AREA OF THE AIRPORT BETWEEN THE INTERSECTION OF THE TWO MAJOR RUNWAYS SO THAT THE USMC CAN COME IN WITHOUT TROUBLE.

-- FOR THE AVIV, HOPE THAT HYOU TOO WILL PUT THIS POSITION FORWARD TO THE ISRAELIS AND URGE THAT THE KIMCHE TEAM, WHICH IS DUE TO TALK TO THE LEBANESE IN BEIRUT TOMORROW, ALSO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME BEFORE RETURNING TO ISRAEL. (I MAY BE AT THE NEWLY REOPENED CHANCERY, PHONE NUMBER 361800.)

DILLON

END OF MESSAGE

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